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ABSTRACT

This report describes instructional strategies to improve the revising and editing skills of sixth grade students during the writing process. The literature review suggested improved instruction and evaluation through a writing workshop approach as a possible solution to the problem of poor revision skills. Within this structure, research also points to creating a positive environment, beginning the workshop with mini-lessons, teacher modeling, peer editing and teacher/student conferencing as possible solutions. This researcher focused specifically on peer editing and teacher/student conferencing. During the first week of September, a survey was administered to all language arts teachers at the site, and students were given a survey regarding their attitude toward writing. Students then drafted writing samples, which were evaluated by the researcher with two rubrics. A second writing sample was evaluated in December with the same rubrics, and the students were given the same survey to reassess their attitude toward writing. The post achievement data obtained from rubrics indicated a significant improvement in students' revising and editing skills in the areas of content and mechanics. In addition, post intervention student attitude survey data demonstrated significant growth in students' understanding of the importance of revising and editing. (Contains 30 references, 21 figures, and a table. Three appendixes contain: the teacher and student surveys; Content Writing Rubric; Mechanics Writing Rubric; the baseline narrative writing prompt and the post narrative writing prompt; Teacher/Student Conferencing Lesson Plans; Peer Editing Lesson Plans; a peer editing guide; and a checklist for student revising and editing skills.) (PM)

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ENHANCING STUDENT REVISING AND EDITING SKILLS THROUGH WRITING CONFERENCES AND PEER EDITING

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ABSTRACT

This report describes instructional strategies to improve the revising and editing skills of students during the writing process. The targeted population consisted of sixth grade middle school students in a middle class suburban community located in a midwestern state. The problems of revision were documented through data consisting of student and teacher surveys, a writing content rubric, and a writing mechanics rubric.

Literature review suggested improved instruction and evaluation through a writing workshop approach as a possible solution to the problem of poor revision skills. Within this structure, research also points to creating a positive environment, beginning the workshop with mini-lessons, teacher modeling, peer editing and teacher/student conferencing as possible solutions. This researcher focused specifically on peer editing and teacher/student conferencing.

A survey was administered to all language arts teachers at the site during the first week of September. Also during this week, students were given a survey regarding their attitude toward writing. This survey was given again to reassess student attitudes toward writing the third week of December. After drafting a writing sample the first week of September, students were evaluated by the researcher with two rubrics. The same content and mechanics rubrics were used again to evaluate another writing sample during the second week of December.

Post intervention achievement data and post intervention attitude data indicate significant growth in the revising and editing process. The post achievement data obtained from rubrics indicated a significant improvement in students' revising and editing skills in the areas of content and mechanics. In addition, post intervention student attitude survey data demonstrated significant growth in students' understanding of the importance of revising and editing.

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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

Poor instructional methods affect student revising and editing skills, which impede academic progress. Evidence for the existence of the problem include the following: teacher observation of the students' drafting and editing skills as assessed in surveys of teachers and students, and poor evaluations on writing rubrics.

Immediate Problem Context

This study will be conducted at one site. The school is located in a residential area, west of a large midwestern city. The one-story brick building is located two blocks from the public library. Currently this site is a middle school servicing sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students. Two octagon-shaped pods house seventh and eighth grade students on the west end of the building. On the east end of the school, a rectangular-shaped hallway encloses a gymnasium and connects twelve sixth grade classrooms. Surrounding the building are houses, a retention pond, a baseball diamond, and a soccer field. The students use the baseball diamond and open field as a playground, but the local park district owns this area.

Educational services have been provided at this site since 1968. The school first began with a pod of seven classrooms, and in 1969 a second pod of classrooms opened. The building

was originally designed as an elementary building and housed kindergarten through grade four. In 1973 several additions were added to the building such as a learning center to join the two pods together, a gym, office area, science lab, home economics area, art room, lunchroom, and locker rooms. At this time the school's name was changed and the building housed all of the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students in the school district. In 1980 six classrooms and a new lunchroom were added to the west end of the junior high building. In 1986 a referendum was passed to build a new junior high school for seventh and eighth grade students. Consequently, after 1988, the school site began servicing only fifth and sixth grade students. To accommodate the needs of a growing population, a second gym and sixteen classrooms were added to the east side of the school for the 1991-1992 school year. This site serviced fifth and sixth grade students for ten years. In March of 1998 the community approved a bond referendum to build a new school and renovate existing schools. In August of 2000 the site returned to servicing sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students and became a middle school.

The 2000 School Report Card revealed the site's enrollment at 997 students. The racial and ethnic background of the students were as follows: (a) 76.2% White, (b) 4.2% Black, (c) 6.9% Hispanic, (d) 12.6% Asian/Pacific Islander, and (e) 0% Native American. The report listed 2.3% of the population as low-income students and 3.6% of the population as limited-English-proficient. In addition fifty-six percent of students use daily bus transportation. The daily attendance rate of the students at this site was 95.9%, and the student mobility rate was 5.4%. The chronic truancy rate was 0.0% (School Report Card, 2000).

The school site has an average class size of 25.9 students. The average per pupil expenditure is $5,369. Each classroom has two computers available for the students. There is a

computer lab with 30 computers available for weekly classroom use. In addition, the library contains 10 computers available for student use. As part of their language arts class, students have 20 minutes weekly to check out books in the library. When students need to research, teachers can reserve the library for classroom use.

Most sixth grade students at the school site move through a flexible schedule, see a homeroom teacher daily, and have multiple teachers for core subjects. Depending on a student's Individualized Education Program (I.E.P.), some special education students stay in a self-contained classroom and others are mainstreamed into the regular classroom with assistance from an aide and/or special education resource teacher. The students' schedule consists of a reading and language arts block, which on average lasts for 2 hours daily. The reading and language arts curriculum utilizes novels for the study of three genres: (a) fantasy, (b) realistic fiction, and (c) mythology. In addition, the students attend mathematics daily for 60 minutes. At this time gifted students attend an accelerated mathematics class studying algebra concepts. Between science and social studies, the students' schedule flexibly alternates. Either science or social studies is attended for 60 minutes each day. On average, the students attend 30 minutes of both science and social studies daily. The social studies curriculum focuses on topics such as ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome, and the Middle Ages and Renaissance periods. Beyond applying the scientific process, the science curriculum requires a study of cells, chemistry, and weather.

The students are offered several related arts programs before, during, and after school. They attend physical education and fitness for 45 minutes each day. On a six-week alternating schedule for 45 minutes daily, the students attend one of the following: (a) technology, (b) home

life, (c) art, (d) health, (e) Junior Great Books, and (f) music. During technology and home life, the students have access to computers in each classroom at a ratio of two students per computer. Music class offers a piano keyboard for each student and provides keyboarding lessons. Band and chorus are offered before and after school for all students who choose to participate. Band students are excused from classes throughout the school day for band lessons. Several clubs and sports teams are available for student participation. Chess club, science olympiad team, science club, math club, technology club, drama club, and spirit club are available after school. There are many athletic teams for students to join such as track, volleyball, basketball, wrestling, cross country, and cheerleading. In addition, the site offers intramural sports such as football, softball, badminton, basketball, and floor hockey.

When examining the staffing pattern, 23% of the staff is male and 77% is female with 65% certified staff and 35% non-certified. The teachers' racial and ethnic backgrounds at this site are as follows: (a) 98.1% White, (b) 1.1% Black, (c) 0.6% Hispanic, (d) 0.2% Asian/Pacific Islander, (e) 0.0% Native American. The average teaching experience at this site is 9.7 years. The average teaching salary for the school district is $40,285. Teachers who earned a master's degree and beyond make up 49.5% of the district staff, while 50.5% of teachers in the district have a bachelor's degree. With weekly written correspondence, parent-teacher conferences, parental visits to school, school visits to home, and telephone conversations, 100% of the students' parents or guardians had personal contact with the staff during the school year (School Report Card, 2000).

The school site has three male administrators: one principal and two assistant principals. The district's average administrator salary is $82,938. The superintendent's salary is $100,000.

The average pupil per administrator ratio is 284.3:1. The total operating expenditure per student is $4,952. The district spends 70.5% of its income on education. Other expenditures include 13.1% on operations and maintenance, 5.4% on transportation, 9.1% on bond and interest, 1.8% on municipal retirement and social security, and 0.2% on site construction and capital improvement (School Report Card, 2000). Several fundraisers benefit the school site financially such as magazine drives, candy sales, flower sales, school dances, special sporting events, etc. Parents, students, administrators, and teachers volunteer their time and effort for these events.

The Surrounding Community

Founded in 1959, the suburban community is located 35 miles west of a large midwestern city. The population is approximately 38,000 and is served by three elementary school districts. A seven member legislative body comprised of the mayor and six trustees governs the middle class community. In 1997 the median household income was $69,464. The average single-family detached home selling price for 1997 was $184,925. The median gross rent for 1997 was $620. The racial and ethnic backgrounds of the community are listed as the following: (a) 88.5% White, (b) 3.8% Black, (c) 6.6% Hispanic, (d) 7.8% Asian/Pacific Islander, (e) 0.2% Native American (www.villageprofile.com).

The community offers many opportunities for student involvement and enrichment. The library promotes reading through a monthly book club and a summer reading program. The local police department offers programs such as Drug Awareness Resistance Education (DARE) and Violence Education Gang Awareness (VEGA) for elementary and middle school students. In addition, the local park district provides recreational activities. Fitness, craft, drama, and

swimming classes have been offered for several years. Two recreation centers house a large gymnasium, nursery, teen center, batting cages, stage, dance studio, weight training room, and indoor and outdoor pools. Several parks feature baseball, soccer, and football fields. Volleyball, tennis, and basketball courts are also available. Bike paths, bordering several small fishing lakes, connect all the parks within the community (www.villageprofile.com).

The community is home to more than 540 businesses and industries. There are more than one million square feet zoned for retail shops, which has led to 15 distinct shopping areas. Several retail stores and local banks have formed a partnership with the local school district to promote education (www.villageprofile.com).

National Context of the Problem

Students are lacking many revising and editing skills. Both Atwell (1987) and Willis (1997) noted that students lack writing skills such as identifying a topic focus, writing a good "lead," adding enough supporting evidence for a thesis statement, organizing a piece of writing by reordering sentences and paragraphs, clarifying main points, elaborating on details, making judicious cuts, and maintaining consistency in proofreading and editing. Without proper instruction, mastering these skills is a challenging task. According to Graves (1983), most students do not know how to revise their writing or even where to begin. Graves stated, "Without help, most children see little sense in revision" (1983, p. 151).

The teacher can unknowingly promote poor revision skills. Too many teachers edit their students' writing. Wilcox stated, "Teachers all seem to have times when their mouths are twitching to say, 'Let me just show you how to fix this'" (Wilcox, 1997, p. 3). In 1996 Lillios and Iding stated, "The average English paper corrected by the average English teacher looks as

though it has been trampled on with cleated boots and has the same effect on the student" (Lillios & Iding, 1996, p. 1). With red ink all over the students' papers, teachers complete the editing process for their students (Lillios & Iding, 1996; Wilcox, 1997; Willis, 1997). Teacher editing reduces student ownership in their writing. When students are unable to take ownership in their writing, the writing becomes the "teacher's work" (Willis, 1997). Meanwhile, students are overwhelmed with too many comments on their papers and their positive feelings toward writing are greatly diminished (Lillios & Iding, 1996). Furthermore, the students begin to feel anxiety about errors and rarely take chances in their writing (Calkins, 1986).

Poor instructional methods and evaluation procedures affect the students' revising skills (Willis, 1997; Atwell, 1987). Some teachers are not providing enough instructional support in order for students to be successful (Willis, 1997). Many teachers simply "assign and evaluate" writing (Willis, 1997). Furthermore, teachers often fail to monitor student work over time, thus emphasizing the product instead of the process (Willis, 1997; Atwell, 1987). According to Atwell (1987), teachers impede student growth by critiquing individual pieces of work without looking for growth and improvement of specific skills over time. Willis (1997) described another criticism of writing instruction in which the process mode is too long. Thus, the students draft many pieces of writing, but never get to the final editing stage or the product.

Traditional grammar instruction is still utilized by many classroom teachers. Unfortunately, traditional grammar instruction has no effect on raising the quality of student writing (Calkins, 1986; Hillocks, 1998). Furthermore, heavy emphasis on mechanics and usage have resulted in a significant loss in the overall writing quality (Hillocks, 1998). Calkins (1986) stated that infrequent writing opportunities are the major reason for the students' problem with

mechanics. When mechanics and editing skills are taught in isolation and not in the context of writing, there is little or no carry-over into the students' writing (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1986; Hillocks, 1998; Willis, 1997).

Teachers can impede their students' editing skills with an inadequate classroom atmosphere. Jane Hansen, the director of the writing lab at the University of New Hampshire, stated, "A writing classroom that's quiet is suspicious" (Willis, 1997, p.3). In many classrooms students are not given the opportunity to discuss writing (Willis, 1997). When students are unable to participate in interactive discussions with peers and adults about writing, their editing skills suffer. Willis (1997) stated, "For students to learn how to revise their writing, they must receive feedback on their work" (Willis, 1997, p.2). Atwell (1987) further criticized the classroom environments of many junior high and middle schools which attempt to "regiment" and control students. Atwell stated, "Students are tracked, given busy seat work, have few opportunities to work together, and have even fewer opportunities to demonstrate affect in the classroom" (Atwell, 1987, p.25). Adolescents are dealing with a variety of emotions and have distinct, unique needs (Rose, 1999). Teachers often forget that this is an important stage of intellectual development (Atwell, 1987). Atwell (1987) believes teachers will not get the best out of their students as writers until they "stop blaming adolescents for adolescent behavior" (Atwell, 1987, p.25).

Beyond inadequate evaluation procedures, inappropriate teaching methods, and a poor classroom environment, student revision skills are also lacking as a result of student misconceptions regarding the revision process. Calkins stated that children believe " . . . a good piece of writing has a neat, correct text" (Calkins, 1986, p. 198). In 1999 Graham and Harris

conducted a study of a learning disabled child who had writing difficulties. When the student was asked what good writing was, the student replied, "A neat paper...all the letters are the same size...all the words are spelled correctly" (Graham & Harris, 1999, p. 2). Many children do not know how to begin to revise their writing (Graves, 1983). Another common student misconception is that authors are not "ordinary people" (Means & Linder, 1998); the students imagine a swiftly created masterpiece. Black and Wilcox (1998, p. 2) stated, "Students hope the 'inspired madman' image of the writer dashing off a masterpiece as it flows rapidly from his superior brain would apply to them." Unfortunately, students do not realize the amount of planning, drafting, and revising that goes into an author's work (Black and Wilcox, 1998). Means and Linder (1998) believe that teachers need to provide more opportunities for children to learn from real authors.

Low self-esteem and poor motivation are additional reasons for students' lack of revising skills (Calkins, 1986; Zemelman & Daniels, 1988). When Graham and Harris (1999) conducted the research study of a learning disabled student with writing difficulties, he observed that the student avoided writing whenever possible, devoted little effort, and spoke negatively about his writing and his ability as a writer. This learning disabled student, like many poorly skilled writers, developed a low self-image.

Many students lack personal investment in their writing. With the lack of personal involvement, students grow resistant towards revising and editing their work (Calkins, 1986). Thus, many adolescents become stubborn and refuse to look back at their writing (Zemelman & Daniels, 1988). This refusal prevents students from growing as editors. Zemelman and Daniels

(1988) described student resistance to writing and the lack of student intrinsic writing motivation by stating the following:

> School has lost its newness or has proven itself to be uninspiring; in any case, adolescents certainly do not act as though they expect any fresh excitement from a day at the work farm. Many have become jaded and bored: good students will work only if paid in the coin of grades, while poor students often won't work whatever the pay.

Teachers have been concerned about student editing skills for several decades, yet it is they, themselves, who seem to impede the revising skills of their students by utilizing poor evaluation procedures, poor instructional practices, and by developing an inadequate classroom environment where students are unable to discuss their writing. As a result, the students' misconceptions regarding how to edit, their low self-esteem, and their poor motivation seem to hinder their writing progress.

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

In order to document the extent of poor student revising and editing skills, a teacher survey on the writing process and student revising skills was distributed. In addition, a student attitude survey was administered regarding the phases of the writing process. Finally, a baseline narrative writing prompt was administered to obtain samples of student writing; these writing samples were evaluated with a content and mechanics rubric. The researcher designed all instruments based on the language arts state standards.

During the last week of August, the first instrument providing problem evidence was administered in the form of a teacher survey on student writing skills. Twenty-three language arts teachers were surveyed at the building site and 15 teachers returned the survey. The teacher survey (Appendix A) results are compiled in Figures 1 and 2. Figure 1 represents the phases of the writing process that language arts teachers believe are the most challenging for students and Figure 2 shows the teachers' opinion of student revising and editing skills. In Figure 2 teachers evaluated student revising and editing skills as "usually accurate" or "rarely or never accurate." Teacher responses were combined into five categories: a) capitalization and punctuation, b) spelling, c) support and imagery, d) focus and clarity, and e) organization.

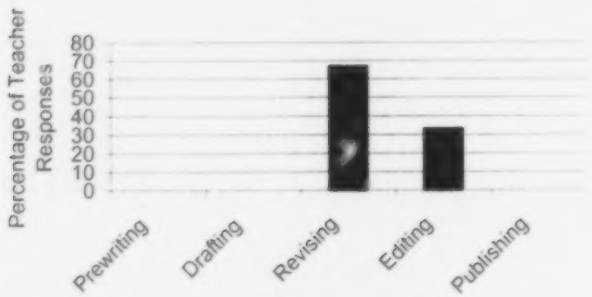

Figure 1. Teacher survey showing the phase of the writing process that give students the most trouble.

Figure 1 shows the results of the teacher survey showing the phase of the writing process that is the most challenging for students. There were no teachers who felt students have the most difficulty with prewriting, drafting or publishing. Sixty-seven percent, however, believed that revision was the most difficult phase for students. Thirty-three percent stated the editing phase as the most difficult.

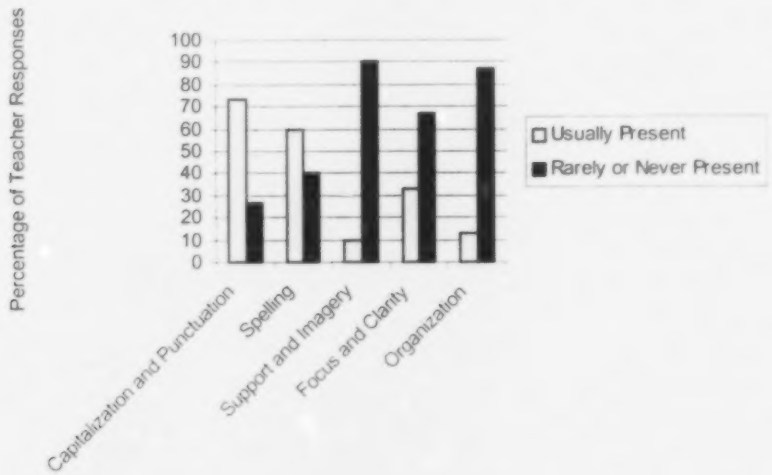

Figure 2. Teacher survey of student writing skill levels in mechanics and content.

Figure 2 shows the results of the teacher survey on student writing skill level in mechanics and content. In capitalization and punctuation, teachers stated that 73% of students are usually accurate, and 27% are rarely or never accurate. Sixty percent of teachers felt students are usually accurate with spelling, and 40% believe students are rarely or never accurate. In the area of support and imagery, 10% of teachers believe students are usually accurate, while 90% believe students are rarely or never accurate. Thirty-three percent of teachers believe students are usually accurate in the area of focus and clarity in their writing, and 67% felt students are rarely or never accurate. For organization in writing, 13% of teachers stated that students are usually accurate, while 87% are rarely or never accurate.

In summary, the first instrument showed that 100% of teachers at the building site believe that revising and editing are the most difficult for students. An average of 81% of teachers stated that students are rarely or never accurate in the areas of support and imagery, focus and clarity, and organization.

The second instrument, a student attitude survey (Appendix A), was administered by the teacher-researcher to 50 sixth grade students during the first week of September. The student survey contained six questions. The answers to three specific survey questions were compiled in Figures 3, 4, and 5. The first question asked students to indicate on which phase of the writing process they spend the most time; the compiled data is found in Figure 3. In Figures 4 and 5 students stated the phase of the writing process that is the most challenging and the phase that is the easiest for them.

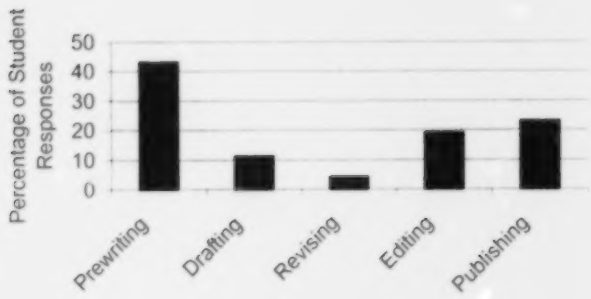

Figure 3. Student attitude survey responses to the phase of the writing process on which students spend the most time.

Figure 3 shows the results of the student attitude survey on the writing process on which students spend the most time. Forty-three percent of the students stated that they spend the most time on prewriting. Only 11% of students stated that they spend the most time on drafting, while 4% stated revision. Nineteen percent of students felt they spend the most time on editing, and 23% stated that they spend the most time on publishing in the total revision process.

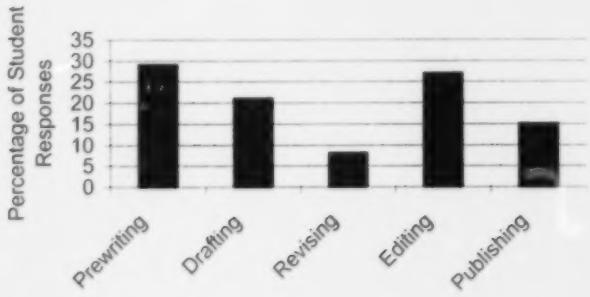

Figure 4. Student attitude survey responses to the phase of the writing process that is the easiest for them.

Figure 4 shows the results of the student attitude survey on the writing process that is the easiest for students. In the survey, 29% of students believed prewriting to be the easiest phase,

while 21% felt drafting is easiest. Eight percent of students stated that revision is the easiest, 27% believed editing is the easiest, and 15% stated publishing.

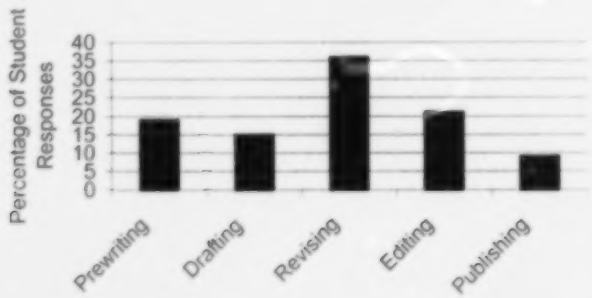

Figure 5. Student responses to the phase of the writing process that gives them the most trouble.

Figure 5 shows the results of the student attitude survey on the writing process phase that causes students the most trouble. Nineteen percent of the students felt prewriting is the most challenging, while 15% felt drafting is the most difficult. Thirty-six percent of the students felt that revision is the most difficult phase of the writing process. The editing phase is the most difficult for 21% of the students, and 9% stated that publishing is the most challenging phase.

In conclusion, the student attitude survey showed that sixty-five percent of the students felt prewriting, drafting, or publishing are the easiest phases. Only 35% of the students felt revising and editing are the easiest phases of the writing process, while 56% of students stated on the attitude survey that revising and editing are the most difficult. Despite the fact that many students felt revising and editing are the most challenging, only 23% of students stated that they spend the most time on these phases.

During the first week of September, the teacher-researcher administered the third instrument, a narrative writing prompt (Appendix A), to 50 sixth grade students. The narrative writing prompt asked students to describe an unforgettable field trip or vacation. The completed

writing samples were used to establish baseline data on student revising skills. The students' narrative writing samples were evaluated with two rubrics, a content rubric and a mechanics rubric. The revision skills evaluated in both rubrics were taken from the district's sixth grade language arts curriculum, which aligns with state language arts standards.

The content rubric for narrative writing (Appendix A) measures five aspects of revision: a) focus, b) clarity, c) organization, d) support, and e) imagery. These five areas are evaluated with a four-point rubric; four points represent student mastery of the skill and three or fewer points indicate that the skill is not mastered.

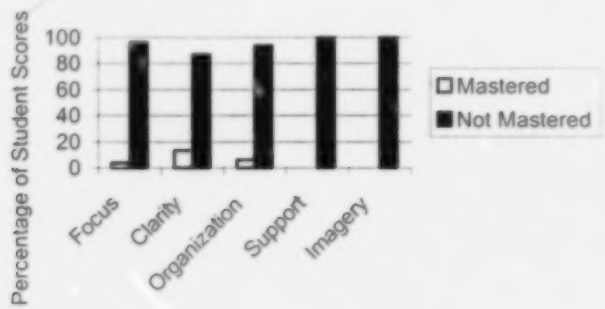

Figure 6. Results of the writing rubric showing student content writing skills.

Figure 6 shows the results of the rubric from the students' narrative writing sample regarding content. When examining content, 96% of the students did not master the use of focus and only 4% demonstrated mastery. Eighty-seven percent of students did not master clarity in their writing, while 13% demonstrated mastery. For organization in their writing, 94% of students did not show mastery and 6% demonstrated mastery. There were no students who demonstrated mastery when using support and imagery in their writing.

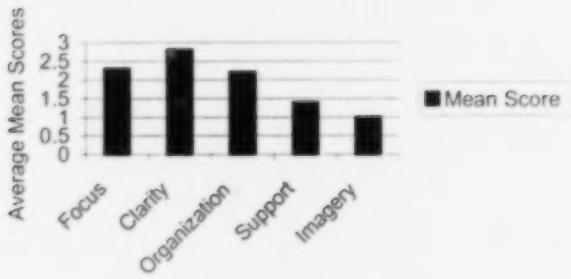

Figure 7. Results of the pre writing rubric showing mean scores of student writing skills in the area of content.

Figure 7 shows the average mean score in the September writing sample in the content areas including focus, clarity, organization, support and imagery. The maximum score in each category is 4.0. In the area of focus, students showed an average mean score of 2.3, while the area of clarity showed a mean score of 2.8. The mean score for organization was 2.2, and the mean score for support was 1.4. In the area of imagery, students showed an average score of 1.0 out of 4.0.

An average of 95% of the students did not show mastery in all five content categories: a) focus, b) clarity, c) organization, d) support, and e) imagery. One hundred percent of students did not demonstrate mastery in providing support and using imagery in the writing sample. With the highest possible score of 4.0, the average mean for student scores range from a minimum of 1.0 in the use of imagery to a maximum of 2.8 in the area of clarity.

The mechanics rubric for narrative writing (Appendix A) measures revision and editing skills in five general categories: a) grammar, b) spelling, c) punctuation, d) capitalization, and e) sentence structure. Each skill category was evaluated based on a four-point rubric; four points

represent student mastery of the skill and three or fewer points indicate that the skill is not mastered.

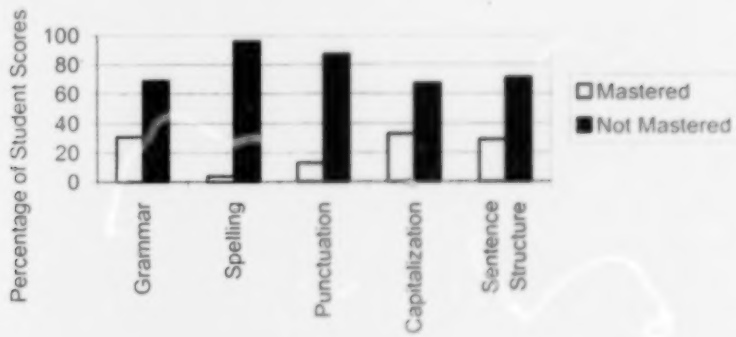

Figure 8. Results of the writing rubric showing student skills in mechanics.

Figure 8 shows the results of the mechanics rubric from the students' narrative writing sample. When using mechanics, 69% of the students did not demonstrate mastery in the area of grammar and 31% demonstrated mastery. Ninety-six percent of students did not demonstrate mastery in spelling, while 4% demonstrated mastery. When using punctuation, 87% of students did not demonstrate mastery and only 13% demonstrated mastery. In the area of capitalization, 67% of students did not show mastery and 13% demonstrated mastery. Finally, 71% did not demonstrate mastery of sentence structure, while 29% demonstrated mastery.

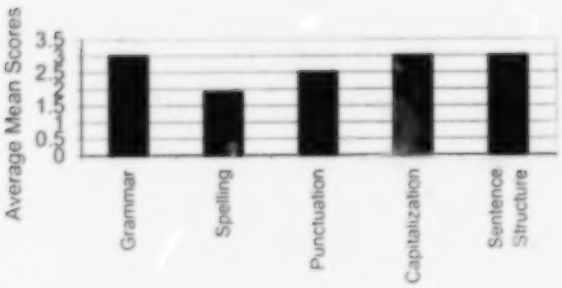

Figure 9. Results of the pre writing rubric showing mean scores of student writing skills in the area of mechanics.

Figure 9 shows the average mean score in the September writing sample in the mechanics areas including grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence structure. The maximum score in each category is 4.0. In the area of grammar, students showed an average mean score of 3.0, while the area of spelling showed a mean score of 1.9. The mean score for punctuation was 2.5, and the mean scores for capitalization and sentence structure were 3.0.

In conclusion, when examining all five areas of mechanics, an average of 78% of students did not demonstrate mastery in mechanics skills, and only 22% demonstrated mastery. With the highest possible score of 4.0, the average mean for student scores range from a minimum of 1.9 in the area of spelling to a maximum of 3.0 in the areas of grammar, capitalization, and sentence structure. Based on the narrative writing sample, the majority of students have not mastered the skills in grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence structure.

Probable Causes

Middle and secondary school students have resisted the revision component of the writing process for years. Many students have learned to "hate" writing and revising (Calkins,

1996; Gorman, 1998; Willis, 1997; Zemelman & Daniels, 1988). According to Zemelman and Daniels, students believe that revision means ". . . you did it wrong at first, and your punishment is to correct lots of errors marked in red" (1988, p. 171). In a 1998 study, Gorman reported that students refused to proofread their work or they briefly scanned it. Teachers have the challenge of ". . . getting students to want to revise" (Tully, 1996, p. 30). Thus, researchers are faced with trying to uncover the underlying causes of student resistance towards revising and their misconceptions regarding how to revise.

The belief that the more red ink a teacher uses the better has given way to a new philosophy, one which encourages specific and "meaningful" teacher comments on student papers, but far fewer comments (Lillios & Iding, 1996, p. 212). Unfortunately, too many teachers take on the role of a critic instead of a coach (Wilcox, 1997). Teachers tend to correct everything, thus overwhelming students with too many comments. Consequently, the students lose ownership in their work and the writing becomes the teacher's work (Allender & Price, 1992; Willis 1997; Zemelman & Daniels, 1988). In addition, excess teacher comments can affect the students' self-confidence about their writing (Calkins, 1986; Lillios & Iding, 1996; Zemelman & Daniels, 1988). Lillios and Iding wrote, "Diederich (1963) states, 'Teachers who insist on marking every error in every student composition should ask themselves whether an all-out attack really works'" (Lillios and Iding, 1996, p. 6). Zemelman & Daniels revealed a "hidden curriculum" behind excessive teacher corrections: "As red-pencillers we purely serve the hidden curriculum, teaching kids to accept criticism passively, reminding them of their inferiority status, stressing issues of orderliness and appearance over content . . . We make ourselves look like uncaring bureaucrats" (1988, p. 218). When teachers make all the

corrections in the students' writing, the majority of corrections are grammatical and technical errors. This encourages the students to believe the misconception that the revision process is primarily fixing technical errors (Lillios & Iding, 1996; Zemelman & Daniels, 1988). Therefore, students are ". . . completely neglecting the real issues of rewriting: order, logic, detail, support, word choice, metaphor, point of view, and all the rest" (Zemelman & Daniels, 1988, p. 171).

According to Zemelman and Daniels (1988, p. 216), teachers feel pressured to correct all errors. Parents, taxpayers, school administrators, board members, and others are "looking over their shoulders" of teachers believing that the only way to evaluate a piece of writing is to correct every error in each student's work. Zemelman and Daniels stated, "The profession of English has raised up successive generations of citizens who believe that the evaluation of writing equals the intensive correction of its mechanical errors" (1988, p. 216). Furthermore, educators need to inform the public about the benefits of formative evaluation (Burke, 1999; Zemelman & Daniels, 1988).

The traditional grammar instruction has no effect on improving the quality of student writing (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1986; Calkins, 1994; Graham, 1999, Hillocks, 1998; Manning & Manning, 1994; Willis, 1997). Furthermore, Willis (1997) stated that drills in isolation have no carry-over into the students' writing. Unfortunately, some school boards and administrators are still requiring large amounts of time to be spent on the study of traditional grammar (Hillocks, 1998). Hillocks revealed the ineffectiveness of traditional grammar instruction in the following passage:

> In some studies a heavy emphasis on mechanics and usage resulted in significant losses in overall [writing] quality. School boards, administrators, and teachers who impose the

> systematic study of traditional school grammar on their students over lengthy periods of time in the name of teaching writing, do them a great disservice which should not be tolerated by anyone concerned with the effective teaching of good writing. (Hillocks, 1998, p. 5)

Developing an appropriate environment for learning revision skills is often a challenging task for teachers. Writing workshop promotes revision skills by emphasizing process and change in a piece of writing over time (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1986; Calkins 1994; Graves, 1983; Manning & Manning, 1994; Tully, 1996; Zemelman & Daniels, 1988). Middle and secondary school teachers often feel uneasy about implementing a writing workshop in the classroom (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1986; Calkins 1994). Some teachers try to experiment with writing workshop for a week or a month (Calkins 1994). Middle and secondary school teachers quickly reject the workshop philosophy when problems occur (Atwell, 1987; Calkins 1994). Teachers become discouraged and decide the workshop is ineffective because students groan and complain. "The fact that we will encounter resistance when we teach secondary school students is probably irrefutable," stated Calkins (1994, p. 161). Many researchers revealed the lack of teacher understanding of the emotional needs of middle and secondary school students (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1986; Calkins, 1994; Lillios & Iding, 1996; Rose, 1999; Zemelman & Daniels, 1988). Adults view students as "insecure, awkward, rebellious, and antisocial" (Rose, 1999, p. 137). Calkins (1994) discussed the problem with middle and secondary school teachers who have "one or two fixed models." Teachers often lack flexible thinking to adapt to the emotionally changing behavior of adolescents; teachers must ". . . reinvent the workshop as they go" (Calkins, 1994, p. 162).

Writing workshop fails when students do not feel a part of the decision-making process (Lillios & Iding, 1996) and the classroom is lacking an established community atmosphere (Calkins, 1994; Zemelman & Daniels, 1988). Calkins (1994) discussed Goodlad's 1984 research of language arts classrooms regarding writing instruction and student choice. Goodlad found that in the upper grades there was very little student choice, and class time was divided into small teacher-directed segments such as class discussion, a worksheet, and a writing activity (Calkins, 1994). Adolescents need to feel that they have control in their lives and that they have choices within the writing classroom (Calkins, 1994). Students are "vulnerable" and "self-conscious" (Calkins, 1994, p. 157-159; Zemelman & Daniels, 1988, p. 10). Zemelman and Daniels stated, "Adolescents are often fearful of exposing themselves …" Thus, students need to feel that they are a part of a "community of writers" (Zemelman & Daniels, 1988, p. 10). In order for writer's workshop to be successful, teachers need to establish a relationship with each student, model the sharing of writing, teach students to provide helpful comments and give genuine compliments (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1994; Lillios & Iding, 1996; Zemelman & Daniels, 1988).

Too many secondary level teachers try to alter writing workshop to "fit" the secondary level (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1994). Calkins reflected on a classroom she observed by stating the following:

> . . . intending to "adapt" the writing workshop to fit secondary-level classrooms, the teacher had in fact done what many of us do with radical new ideas: we stretch, chop, slice, and twist them so that they fit into the norms of American education. (1994, p. 165-6)

By "adapting" the writing workshop, teachers abandon the philosophy of the workshop entirely. Teachers often try to create a series of formulaic one-step activities (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1994). Within the book, In the Middle: Writing, Reading, and Learning with Adolescents, Atwell (1987) reflected on her early experiences with writing workshop in which she tried turning the workshop into a series of whole-class activities and individual exercises. Furthermore, Calkins (1994) stated the following regarding altering writing workshop:

> As long as the whole class moves in unison through a series of prescribed, teacher-assigned steps, the classroom is probably not significantly different from classes in which students spend most of the time on ditto sheets of drill-and-skill exercises. (p. 166)

Researchers revealed an underlying cause and an obvious challenge for failing writing workshop programs at the middle school and secondary levels: the organization and structure of schools (Calkins, 1994; Zemelman & Daniels, 1988). Throughout a typical school day, middle and secondary school teachers typically see over one hundred students. These teachers must establish a sense of community in multiple class periods (Calkins, 1994; Zemelman & Daniels, 1988); their contact time with students is only forty minutes to an hour each day. With the lack of time, teacher/student writing conferences are rare and very short in length (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1994; Zemelman & Daniels, 1988). In the following passage, Calkins reflected on the large number of students in middle and secondary school classrooms and the lack of time available to work and build a personal connection.

> When people ask me, "How can I teach writing well when I have one hundred and twenty students?" I admit to myself, "It can't be done." My husband, who is a psychotherapist,

> limits the number of patients he sees to twenty-eight a week. He does this not because he wants to limit his hours in the office, but because he knows he cannot hold the details of more than twenty-eight lives in his head. We teachers cannot hold the details of one hundred and twenty lives in our minds at once. (1994, p. 163)

Several researchers discussed the need for teacher modeling in order to improve student revising skills (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1994; Conner, 2000; Gorman, 1998; Graves, 1983; Tully, 1996; Willis, 1997; and Zemelman & Daniels, 1988). In 1998, Gorman reported, "Students don't know how to evaluate the good from the bad" (p. 3). Graves (1983) discussed that children do not know what revision looks like. Furthermore, revision needs to be taught and assisted by the teacher (Graves, 1983). Zemelman and Daniels addressed teacher disappointment with the lack of student revision skills by stating, "Obviously, if students don't know how to carry out the task, just assigning it to them won't yield very useful results" (1988, p. 179). Without teacher modeling, students will ". . . submit a virtual photocopy of their previous work" (Gorman, 1998, p. 3).

Conner (2000) researched the effects of real audiences to motivate students and improve their revising skills. Student motivation increased but their skills in revising did not. Conner speculated about the need for teacher modeling of revision skills.

> . . . but I learned that rather than let them wallow in pooled ignorance, I needed to more directly teach them how. As Madrasco points out, "Deficiencies in proofreading (and revising) skills are usually due to a lack of instruction." My students panicked over their mistakes, but rereading their work over and over did not help them find errors. (Conner, 2000, p. 7)

Literature repeatedly finds that poor teacher instruction impedes student revising and editing skills. However, teacher-training programs seem to be an underlying cause of poor writing instruction. Zemelman and Daniels (1988) discussed college and university teacher-training programs as a cause of poor writing instruction and emphasized the need for more pedagogy and less content. They stated, "If I, as a teacher, spend the class period telling you the rules for good writing, I am doing something profoundly different from what I do if I engage you as an active participant in a writing workshop" (Zemelman & Daniels, 1988, p. 12). Hillocks (1998) also stressed the need for college and university faculty to teach effective methods for writing instruction. Hillocks stated, "Without effective training at this level, new practitioners entering the field are likely to rely on such relatively ineffective foci of instruction as grammar..." (1998, p. 7). In addition, school districts lack quality staff development in revision strategies and the writing process. Consequently, there are many poorly trained classroom teachers. Hillocks (1998) believes that local, state, and national governments do not designate enough funding to train teachers to use more effective teaching strategies. Teachers are not encouraged or given adequate time to research the theories, discuss the strategies, create new lessons and materials, implement the new strategies, and make adaptations (Hillocks, 1998).

In conclusion, the literature shows that inadequate evaluation procedures, an inappropriate classroom climate, and poor writing instruction affect the students' revising skills. Poor evaluation procedures and instruction create student misconceptions regarding the revision process, which result in poor student motivation and low self-esteem. Unfortunately, the organization and structure of middle and secondary schools also impede teacher instruction and

the effectiveness of the writing workshop. Finally, poor college and university teacher-training programs, the lack of staff development, and the lack of funding to assist teachers to implement change seem to be underlying causes for insufficient evaluation procedures and writing instruction.

In summary, the evidence at the site showed poor student revising and editing skills. One hundred percent of teachers surveyed at the building site believe that students have the most difficulty with revising and editing compared to the other phases of the writing process; they stated that most students have inadequate skills in providing support and imagery, maintaining focus and clarity, and organizing their writing. The student attitude survey revealed that students spend the least amount of time on revising their writing; 56% of the students stated that revising and editing are the most difficult phases. For the last instrument, the narrative writing rubric illustrates that students have not mastered focus, clarity, organization, support, and imagery in their writing. In addition, the narrative writing rubric revealed that 78% of the students participating in the study seem to have inadequate mechanics skills. Therefore, both the literature and evidence at the school site reveal the need for implementing revision and editing interventions in the classroom.

CHAPTER 3

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

For the past few decades, research has revealed the importance of implementing writing workshop procedures to improve student writing. The implementation of the writing workshop is necessary for specifically developing revision and editing skills. Atwell (1987) stated that the workshop ". . . uniquely accommodates individual needs, invites independence, and challenges growth" (Atwell, 1987, p. 40).

When implementing workshop procedures in a middle school classroom, understanding the nature of adolescence is essential. Zemelman and Daniels stated, "We are all teachers of students first, before we are teachers of any subject" (Zemelman and Daniels, 1988, p. 47). Calkins (1994) discussed Tom Newkirk's thoughts on the time of adolescence; Newkirk described adolescence as a time of "self-consciousness" or an awareness of personal intelligence. According to Calkins (1994), adolescents learn about who they are and build a sense of identity. In addition, Atwell (1987) recommended that middle school educators act on three principles when working with adolescents: a) accept the range of emotions by channeling student energy instead of trying to control it, b) recognize each student as an individual, and c) offer students' responsibility for and choice in their learning.

Atwell (1987) is not the only researcher to emphasize the importance of providing students with choices in their learning. According to Calkins (1994, p. 161), middle school students need structure and yet "endless flexibility." Teachers must plan lessons that develop out of student interests and ideas (Calkins, 1994); this helps motivate students to write and learn. Tully (1996) revealed that offering student choice builds intrinsic motivation to draft and make revisions in their work; the students take ownership in their writing. Finally, Zemelman and Daniels emphasized that offering topic choice encourages students to practice revision strategies.

> If students are to care about revising a particular piece, they must want to make it better, to go back and look at it again, contemplate it, be involved with it. They have to own it and think of it not just as the teacher's topic and the teacher's responsibility, but theirs. (1988, p. 173)

Developing a positive classroom climate promotes student revision skills (Atwell, 1987; Tully, 1996; Zemelman & Daniels, 1988). The students need to feel that the classroom is a trusting and safe community in order to reveal their weaknesses in their writing to a peer or teacher (Tully, 1996; Zemelman & Daniel, 1988). Calkins (1994) suggested that teachers establish relationships with their students by answering student writing with reflective thoughts and a short retelling of personal experiences. According to Zemelman and Daniels (1988), creating a positive classroom climate fosters student revision skills by promoting both ownership and audience. Tully (1996) and Calkins (1994) suggested that teachers should be careful observers of their students in and out of the classroom; teachers must show they care by addressing student interactions. In addition, teachers need to model a supportive environment by listening, respecting, offering feedback, and encouraging students in sharing (Calkins, 1994;

Tully, 1996; Zemelman & Daniel, 1988). Tully (1996) suggested giving deliberate messages by asking questions, offering suggestions, and making positive comments to encourage an atmosphere of respect and trust. Zemelman and Daniels (1988) recommended that teachers should repeat sincere signals to students that they should express their own ideas freely.

Researchers stressed the importance of middle school students interacting with their peers to enhance their knowledge of literacy (Atwell, 1987; Buss & Karnowski, 2000; Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1983; Ross & Roe, 1990; Tully, 1996; Zemelman & Daniels, 1988). Middle school students need social interaction within the classroom to engage them as learners (Atwell, 1987). Social interaction provides an authentic audience for each student's writing (Calkins, 1994; Conner, 2000; Tully, 1996; Willis, 1997; Zemelman & Daniels, 1988). Zemelman and Daniels (1988) believe that any piece of "real" writing begins in some social purpose for a "real" audience. Thus, writing is a socially engaging act in which students need to discuss within a writing community. Zemelman and Daniels stated, ". . . the writing of teenagers inevitably puts them in relation to others in a community or social group" (1988, p. 49). Revision strategies such as peer editing and group sharing promote social interaction throughout the classroom.

Many researchers discussed the importance of organizing classroom space for revision (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1994; De La Paz, 1999; Graves, 1983; Gorman, 1998; Tully, 1996; Zemelman & Daniels, 1988). Tully (1996) suggested organizing the classroom with designated signs such as peer conference area, teacher-student conference area, computer drafting station, an uninterrupted silent writing area, and publishing station. Furthermore, the physical layout of a writing workshop classroom benefits students by offering movement in the classroom which promotes literacy development and engages students in learning (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1994).

Students shift from one station to another as they move through the phases of the writing process (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1994; Ross & Roe, 1990; Tully, 1996).

In addition to organizing the physical layout of the room, Tully (1996) and other researchers emphasized the importance of organizing writing workshop with specific daily routines. Researchers also discussed the importance of giving students an opportunity to write daily for an extended amount of time (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1994; De La Paz, 1999; Graves, 1988; Gorman, 1998; Tully, 1996; Zemelman & Daniels, 1988). Tully stated, "Devoting sufficient time to a writing workshop is crucial, as it allows the full writing cycle to be played out . . ." (Tully, 1996, p. 22). Calkins (1994, p. 185) stated that a "predictable" hour each day must be set aside for the workshop. Within this hour, teacher instruction or a mini-lesson should be 10 minutes, 20 minutes should be spent on peer editing and group sharing of writing, and for the remaining 30 minutes the students should be working on self-selected, independent writing or conferencing with the teacher (Calkins, 1994). Tully (1996), however, stated that two-thirds of the writing workshop time should be spent on independent writing and the remaining time on peer conferencing and mini-lessons.

Researchers emphasized the importance of teacher modeling of revision strategies (Atwell, 1987; Buss & Karnowski, 2000; Calkins, 1994; Conner, 2000; De La Paz, 1999; Gorman, 1998; Graves, 1983; Manning & Manning, 1994; Ross & Roe, 1990; Tully, 1996; Willis, 1997; Zemelman & Daniels, 1988). Students need to be taught what revision is and the process of how to do it. Tully stated, "Students need to know what to shoot for, what the target is. They need to know what an unrevised piece and a revised piece look like and why one is better than the other" (1996, p. 29). De La Paz (1999, p. 8) defined modeling as "thinking

aloud" a strategy. Furthermore, teachers can improve the revising and editing skills of their students by composing a piece of writing in front of the students (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1983; Manning & Manning, 1994; Tully, 1996; Zemelman & Daniels, 1988). Zemelman and Daniels (1988) discussed the importance of a skilled writer "vocalizing" internal thoughts, decision-making, and feelings in front of the students while writing on the overhead or on large chart paper.

During a five to fifteen minute mini-lesson, researchers suggested that teachers model revision strategies for the whole class (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1994; De La Paz, 1999; Graham, 1999; Lillio & Iding, 1996; Means & Linder, 1998; Ross & Roe, 1990; Tully, 1996; Zemelman & Daniels, 1988). During this instructional time, teachers need to flexibly present revision strategies according to the specific needs of the writing population (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1994). The order of content being taught depends on student revision and editing needs. Teachers recognize the students' writing needs through informal observation of student writing during the writing workshop (Allender & Price, 1992; Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1986; Calkins, 1994; Cole, 1999; Gorman, 1998; Lillios & Iding, 1996; Willis, 1997; Zemelman & Daniels, 1988).

According to Atwell (1987), Willis (1997), and Zemelman and Daniels (1988), revision and editing skills should be taught in the context of "real" writing. Along with teacher modeling of revision skills with a piece of their own writing, real authors should be used as models for quality writing and to inspire further student revision (Atwell, 1986; Black & Wilcox, 1998; Buss & Karnowski, 2000; Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1983; Lancia, 1987; Lockman, 2000; Ross & Roe, 1990; Tully, 1996). It is appropriate to use literature as a model during mini-lessons.

Students need a real audience and purpose for revising and editing their work (Conner, 2000; Willis, 1997; Zemelman & Daniels, 1988). When students wrote a piece of writing for a specific audience, Conner (2000) found less student resistance with revising and editing. The students' interest and motivation increased when they knew that their writing would be published and read by someone other than the teacher.

Typically, teachers have evaluated writing summatively with one final letter grade. Researchers now emphasize the importance of utilizing ongoing assessment or formative assessment in the writing classroom; formative assessment focuses on progress and growth over time (Atwell, 1987; Burke, 1999; Tully, 1996; Zemelman & Daniels, 1988). Zemelman and Daniels discussed the importance of formative evaluation to meet individual needs in the writing classroom.

> Good formative evaluation stretches and challenges kids to operate in their "zone of proximal development." It neither underestimates their capacities nor asks them to perform feats far beyond their developmental level, but rather gets them to work in the range between the known and the unknown, right at the border of their ability. (1988, p. 217)

Portfolios are one type of formative assessment highly suggested for the writing classroom (Atwell, 1987; Burke, 1999; Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1983; Zemelman & Daniels, 1989). Zemelman and Daniels (1989) stated that students should have two writing folders: one for drafts in progress and another for published pieces of writing. Atwell (1987) and Tully (1996) suggested that students keep a folder containing every attempted draft, revised piece, and polished final draft; keeping all the drafts demonstrates student revising and editing growth.

Burke (1999) discussed this type of portfolio containing all drafts and the final product as a "process folio." Both Burke (1999) and Atwell (1987) suggested that students date each draft and individual piece of writing that is put into the writing portfolio to show growth in revision and editing skills over an extended period of time.

Beyond portfolios, there are other formative assessment options to authentically assess student writing progress and growth. Two examples of formative assessment are grading rubrics and student reflection or metacognition. According to Burke (1999), rubrics are highly effective assessment tools because they provide descriptive levels of progress. Students will be more successful revisors and editors of their work if they have a clear understanding of the criteria in which they are being evaluated. "One of the most powerful instructional tools to help students internalize the criteria and recognize quality work is to have students develop the criteria for performance assessment with the teacher" (Burke, 1999, p. 89). Teaching students metacognitive strategies such as self-evaluative questions and reflective statements helps students monitor their revision progress (Atwell, 1987; Burke, 1999; De La Paz, 1999; Gorman, 1998; Lillios & Iding, 1996; Ross & Roe, 1990; Tully, 1996; Underwood, 1998; Zemelman & Daniels, 1988).

Using checklists and anecdotal records helps monitor student growth during informal teacher observation of daily student writing (Allender & Price, 1992; Atwell, 1987; Burke, 1999; Calkins, 1986; Calkins, 1994; Cole, 1999; Gorman, 1998; Graham & Harris, 1999; Lillios & Iding, 1996; Willis, 1997; Zemelman & Daniels, 1988). Calkins (1986) and Zemelman and Daniels (1988) suggested that teachers create a revision and editing skills checklist to be utilized

by the teacher while conducting informal observation of student writing during the writing workshop.

Editing and revision checklists were also suggested for use during writing conferences (Atwell, 1987; Gorman, 1998; Graham & Harris, 1999; Graves, 1983; Ross & Roe, 1990; Tully, 1996; Zemelman & Daniels, 1988). Writing conferences are another means of informal evaluation that engage students in revising and editing their work. Tully (1996) discussed many different types of writing conferences such as student to student, student to teacher, student to small group, and student to whole class conferences. Calkins (1994) discussed conducting conferences for specific purposes such as content, design, process, and evaluation conferences. During writing conferences, Tully suggested that the author or student read aloud his or her own piece of writing in order to ". . . hear the language and rhythms, and catch things that are missing or need to be changed" (1996, p. 25).

Peer editing is a type of writing conference useful for improving student revising and editing skills (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1994; Gorman, 1998; Graves, 1983; Lillios & Iding, 1996; Manning & Manning, 1994; Ross & Roe, 1990; Tully, 1996; Willis, 1997; Zemelman & Daniels, 1988). Before implementing peer writing conferencing in the classroom, Tully (1996, p. 74) suggested using a "goldfish bowl" conference for the purpose of modeling effective procedures. Two students model a peer editing session in front of the class. As an audience, the students "see and hear . . . what a real conference is like" (Tully, 1996, p. 74). The "goldfish bowl" conference allows for the "intimacy of a one-to-one conversation, because the conference partners pretend that no one is listening" (Tully, 1996, p. 74). In addition, several researchers discussed modeling for students how to provide positive comments and appropriate, helpful suggestions while peer

conferencing (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1994; Tully, 1996; Zemelman & Daniels, 1988). Zemelman and Daniels (1988) suggested that teachers model I-messages to promote positive comments and constructive criticism. In addition, Zemelman and Daniels discussed providing students with a peer critique sheet containing reflective questions to promote revision and editing of the piece of the writing. Besides using editing checklists and peer critique forms during student conferencing, Tully (1996) suggested posting a list of revision and editing questions in the classroom to assist the discussion of student writing. Both Tully (1996) and Atwell (1987) suggested that teachers let students chose their peer editing partner. However, Zemelman & Daniels (1988) stated that teachers should assign peer editing groups and the same group should work together for an extended amount of time or even the entire school year to build trust and develop regular routines.

Teacher to student writing conferencing is a writing intervention for improving revision and editing skills. Tully (1996) and Atwell (1987) believe that each teacher to student conference should be three to five minutes in length and the teacher should focus on only one aspect of a student's writing. Graves (1983) stated that the role of the teacher during a writing conference is that of an "advocate." With the child holding and reading the piece of writing aloud, the student should sit next to the teacher during the conference and the teacher should be attentively listening to the piece (Atwell, 1987; Graves, 1983; Ross & Roe, Tully, 1996). According to Graves (1988) and Ross and Roe (1990), conducting efficient conferences depend highly on skillful questioning by the teacher. Graves stated, "Questions need to be timely" (1988, p. 107). He categorized conference questions into six types of questions: opening questions, follow-up questions, questions on basic structure, process questions, development

questions, and deeper reflective questions that cause the student "a temporary loss of control" (1988, p. 116). A skillful teacher will know what types of questions are appropriate for each unique conference. Ross and Roe (1990), on the other hand, categorized their questions into topics for revision: questions for a quality introduction and strong closing, questions for encouraging elaboration, and questions to promote clarity and maintain focus. For example, some questions to promote clarity and focus were, "Do you have more than one story in this piece?" and "Do your words say exactly what you want to say?" (1990, p. 246). In addition, writing conferences can promote student revision by providing opportunities for the teacher to praise changes that students made in a specific part of their writing.

Calkins (1994) cautions teachers about the use of editing checklists and preset questions during teacher to student conferencing and peer conferencing. She believes that preset questions tend to make students self-conscious. In addition, these questions can be too formulaic and are not shaped from student writing needs.

In conclusion, current literature offers numerous interventions for improving student revising and editing skills. Literature suggests the importance of implementing writing workshop procedures, developing a community for revision, modeling the revision process, utilizing formative evaluation, and implementing writing conferences to improve student revising and editing skills.

Project Objectives and Processes

As a result of the use of peer editing, during the period of September 2001 to December 2001, the targeted sixth grade class will increase their revision skills, as measured by surveys and

two writing rubrics. In order to accomplish the project objectives, the following processes are necessary:

1. Professional literature on peer editing will be reviewed.
2. A peer editing guide fostering revision skills will be developed by the researcher.
3. Lessons reflecting revision skills will be constructed.
4. A series of mini-lessons that address peer editing will be developed for language arts.
5. The researcher will model peer editing strategies and procedures in mini-lessons.
6. The researcher will promote an environment that is socially safe and encourages risk-taking.

As a result of the use of teacher to student writing conferencing, during the period of September 2001 to December 2001, the targeted sixth grade class will increase their revision skills, as measured by surveys and rubrics.

In order to accomplish the project objective, the following processes are necessary:

1. Professional literature on conferencing will be reviewed.
2. A checklist of skills and an anecdotal chart will be developed to assist conferencing.
3. A curricular unit reflecting revision skills will be constructed.
4. Guidelines that address writing workshop procedures will be addressed through mini-lessons.
5. Guidelines that address teacher/ student conferencing will be presented through mini-lessons.
6. The researcher will model revision and editing strategies while conferencing.

Project Action Plan

There are several steps to implementing the revision intervention strategies of teacher to student writing conferences and peer editing. From February to June 2001, the researcher will review literature books and research articles that discuss revision strategies. From July 2001 through August 2001, the researcher will gather and develop materials for implementing the strategies; a peer editing form, steps for revision chart, a teacher survey, a student survey, a mechanics writing rubric, and a narrative writing rubric will be created by the researcher. The researcher will also develop mini-lessons on writing workshop procedures and revision strategies before and during the four-month study.

During the first week of September, a teacher and student survey will be administered. The teacher survey will be distributed to 23 teachers at the site to evaluate student revising and editing skills. In addition, the researcher will administer a student attitude survey regarding the writing process to 50 sixth grade students at the site. The researcher will also administer a baseline narrative writing prompt by reading it aloud to the same 50 sixth grade students during the first week of September. The students' writing will be evaluated with two writing rubrics, one for mechanics and the other for narrative writing elements.

During August and September, the researcher will review literature on writing workshop mini-lessons, student/teacher writing conferences, and peer editing. During the second week of September to the first week of December, the researcher will implement writing workshop mini-lessons as needed. The researcher will model and implement writing conferencing from the third week of September to the first week of December by conferencing with four to five students

daily. A skills checklist and anecdotal records will be utilized to assist in monitoring individual student progress. During the first week of October, the researcher will model peer editing and discuss classroom procedures. In December the researcher will administer the same student survey to the targeted sixth grade students. Finally, the researcher will administer the post narrative writing prompt during the first week of December and will evaluate the writing with the same two rubrics used to evaluate the writing in September.

The project begins February 2001 and ends in December 2001. Table 1 details the plan.

Table 1. Describes research project action plan from February 2001 through December 2001.

Project Objective	Intervention	Targeted Group Behavior	Teacher/ Researcher Behavior	Materials	Time: Frequency and Duration
To improve teacher writing instruction and increase student revising skills	Collect materials that foster revision skills.	None	Researcher reviews and collects materials for revision skills	Books and articles with revision strategies	February, 2001 through June, 2001
To improve teacher writing instruction and increase student revising skills	Develop materials that foster revision skills.	None	Researcher creates peer editing form, a teacher survey, a student survey, a student skills checklist, and a narrative writing rubric.	Computer, markers, paper and poster board	July, 2001 through August, 2001
To improve teacher writing instruction and increase student revising skills	Administer survey to the teachers evaluating student revision skills.	Language arts teachers at building site take survey	Researcher presents survey to teachers. Researcher collects surveys; then records and analyzes results.	A cover letter and teacher survey	The survey will be distributed to teachers the first week of September.

Project Objective	Intervention	Targeted Group Behavior	Teacher/ Researcher Behavior	Materials	Time: Frequency and Duration
To improve teacher writing instruction and increase student revising skills	Administer attitude survey to the students regarding the writing process.	Two classes of sixth grade students take survey	Researcher distributes and reads aloud survey to sixth grade students.	A cover letter and student survey	During the first week of September for ten minutes
To improve teacher writing instruction and increase student revising skills	Develop personal narrative prompt, and mechanics and content rubrics using state standards.	None	Researcher creates writing prompt.	Paper and transparency for writing prompt	August, 2001
To improve teacher writing instruction and increase student revising skills	Administer narrative prompt. Evaluate student narratives with two rubrics.	Two classes of sixth grade students draft narrative from prompt	Researcher administers narrative prompt by reading aloud directions. Researcher evaluates the writing with two rubrics.	Narrative prompt, a transparency of the prompt, mechanics and narrative rubrics, and pencils	During the first week of September 2001, administer narrative writing prompt for one hour.
To improve teacher writing instruction and increase student revising skills	Develop mini-lessons on writing workshop procedures and skill strategies.	None	Researcher plans workshop lessons by rereading books and articles on mini-lesson strategies and procedures.	Books and articles on mini-lesson strategies and procedures	Develop mini-lessons daily from August, 2001 to December, 2001
To improve teacher writing instruction and increase student revising skills	Develop an introductory lesson on teacher/ student conferences.	None	Researcher rereads books and articles on conference procedures and plans lessons.	Books and articles on writing conference procedures	August, 2001 and first week of September, 2001

Project Objective	Intervention	Targeted Group Behavior	Teacher/ Researcher Behavior	Materials	Time: Frequency and Duration
To improve teacher writing instruction and increase student revising skills	Implement lessons on writing workshop procedures and skill strategies as needed.	Two classes of sixth grade students participate in lesson and practice strategies	Researcher models and coaches students through the writing process.	Books and articles on mini-lesson strategies and procedures	Twice a week from the first week of Sept. to the second week of December
To improve teacher writing instruction and increase student revising skills	Implement lesson on teacher/ student writing conferences.	Two classes of sixth grade students observe conference procedures	Researcher models a teacher/ student writing conference with a "fishbowl" conference.	A piece of student writing and the teacher revision skills checklist	Two days during the third week of September
To improve teacher writing instruction and increase student revising skills	Implement teacher/ student writing conferencing.	Sixth grade students participate in conferencing with the researcher. The researcher models revisions skills during conference.	Researcher conducts conferences and keeps anecdotal records of the teacher/student conference.	A piece of student writing, the teacher revision skills checklist, and chart for keeping anecdotal records.	Teacher conferences with 4 to 5 students daily for three to five minutes from the second week of September 2001 to the second week of December 2001.
To improve teacher writing instruction and increase student revising skills	Develop introductory peer editing lesson.	None	Researcher rereads books and articles on peer editing types and procedures. Researcher plans lessons.	Books and articles on peer editing procedures	September, 2001

Project Objective	Intervention	Targeted Group Behavior	Teacher/ Researcher Behavior	Materials	Time: Frequency and Duration
To improve teacher writing instruction and increase student revising skills	Implement introductory peer editing lesson.	Sixth grade students practice peer editing	Researcher models and introduces lesson on peer editing.	Peer editing form and student writing	For two days during the first week of October
To improve teacher writing instruction and increase student revising skills	Conduct class peer editing session.	Sixth grade students practice peer editing	Researcher observes and monitors student revision techniques and the peer revision strategy. The researcher keeps anecdotal records.	Peer editing form, student writing, and an anecdotal record form are needed.	The students will participate in peer editing for twenty minutes each week from the first week of October to the first week of December.
To improve teacher writing instruction and increase student revising skills	Develop personal narrative prompt for sixth grade students.	None	Researcher creates writing prompt.	Paper and writing prompt	November, 2001
To improve teacher writing instruction and increase student revising skills	Implement narrative writing. Evaluate writing with two rubrics.	None	Researcher distributes and reads aloud prompt to sixth grade students. Researcher evaluates the writing with two rubrics.	Narrative prompt, mechanics and narrative rubrics, and pencils	First week of December 2001
To improve teacher writing instruction and increase student revising skills	Administer attitude survey to the students regarding the writing process.	Two classes of sixth grade students complete survey	Researcher distributes and reads aloud survey to sixth grade students.	Student survey	Administer survey during the second week of December for ten minutes.

Methods of Assessment

The following assessment tools will be utilized during the four-month study: a) a survey of fellow teachers regarding student revision skills, b) a student attitude survey, and c) two writing rubrics for evaluating the students' narrative writing content and use of revision skills.

The first instrument, a teacher survey (Appendix A), will be utilized the first week of September to establish student revising and editing skill needs at the research site. First, the survey asked language arts teachers to indicate the most difficult phase of the writing process for students. Then, the survey invited teachers to evaluate student revising and editing skill proficiency in the following seven categories: capitalization, spelling, punctuation, focus and clarity, providing support, organization, and incorporating imagery. The teachers evaluated student writing skill level in each category as "usually accurate" or "rarely or never accurate."

The second instrument, a student attitude survey (Appendix A), will be administered the first week of September and the second week of December. The student survey contains six questions and the answers to three specific questions will be compiled and analyzed. The first question asked students to indicate on which phase of the writing process they spend the most time. The second question asked students to state the most challenging writing phase and the final question asked students to indicate the easiest phase of the writing process.

During the first week of September and the first week of December, the researcher will administer narrative writing prompts (Appendix A and B). For the third instrument, the researcher will measure the effectiveness of peer editing and teacher writing conferences by utilizing a mechanics and content rubric to evaluate pre and post narrative writing samples.

The narrative writing content rubric (Appendix A) measures five aspects of revision: a) focus, b) clarity, c) organization, d) support, e) imagery. The five areas will be evaluated with a four-point rubric; four points represent student mastery of the skill and three or fewer points indicate that the skill is not mastered. The mechanics rubric (Appendix A) measures student revising and editing skills based on five general categories: a) grammar, b) spelling, c) punctuation, d) capitalization, and e) sentence structure. Each skill category will be evaluated based on a four-point rubric; four points represent student mastery of the skill and three or fewer points indicate that the skill is not mastered.

In summary, the literature review offered many interventions for improving student revising and editing skills. Some interventions for improving student revising and editing skills were the implementation of writing workshop procedures, developing a classroom community for revision, modeling the revision process, utilizing formative evaluation, and implementing writing conferences. Based on the literature, the researcher's project objective is to improve student revising and editing skills through the implementation of peer editing and teacher to student conferencing. The researcher's plan is to implement these strategies during writing workshop from the last week of August to the first week of December 2001. The effectiveness of these interventions will be evaluated with a student attitude survey and two writing rubrics, a content rubric and a mechanics rubric. The writing rubrics will evaluate student narrative writing samples before and after the interventions are implemented in the classroom.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The objective of this project was to increase the revision and editing skills of sixth grade students through the implementation of peer editing and teacher/student writing conferencing during the period of August 2001 to December 2001. The students' revision and editing skills before the intervention were measured with a teacher survey (Appendix A), student attitude survey (Appendix A), and a narrative writing sample. Using a narrative prompt (Appendix A), this narrative writing sample was obtained in September 2001 and evaluated using two writing rubrics, a mechanics and content rubric. This established a baseline for the students' writing skills. The surveys were administered in September to the teachers and the students.

Through the implementation of the writing workshop, the researcher modeled teacher/student conferencing in September; conferencing was conducted from September to December 2001 for 10 to 30 minutes daily as stated in lesson plans (Appendix C). The original action plan stated that the researcher would conference with three to five students daily. With interruptions in schedule and classroom management issues, the researcher discovered that conferencing with five students daily was challenging. By the end of October, scheduling interruptions were minimized and daily workshop routines were effectively set in place. Thus, the researcher conferenced with four or more students daily in November and December. Many

students requested additional conferencing with the teacher/researcher beyond the assigned weekly scheduled conference to gain additional feedback on their writing.

In October the researcher introduced and modeled peer editing; the students conducted conferences with a peer editing guide (Appendix C) containing open-ended questions and a checklist of content and mechanics skills. Original plans called for daily peer editing sessions for 10 minutes in which students would share and edit their writing in pairs or groups of three. Two weeks into the intervention, the number of peer editing sessions was reduced from five days a week to one or two days a week for 20 minutes. This was a necessary change due to the lack of instructional time in the daily schedule. In addition, the researcher discovered that the 10-minute peer editing session was an insufficient amount of time for students to share and edit their peers' work. Thus, the time was doubled to create 20-minute peer editing sessions, which provided a longer amount of time for students to give quality feedback.

Due to many interruptions in the daily schedule during the second week of December, the final narrative prompt (Appendix B) was administered one week later than planned, and the student survey (Appendix A) was administered the third week of December. The original action plan stated that the student survey and the post narrative prompt would be administered the first week of December. The results of the post student attitude survey and the post narrative writing rubrics were compiled during the third week of December.

In conclusion, peer editing and teacher/student conferencing were implemented from September 2001 to December 2001. Baseline data of the students' revision and editing skills were obtained from a teacher survey, student survey, and a narrative writing sample evaluated by two writing rubrics, a mechanics and content rubric. The September implementation of

teacher/student conferencing and the October implementation of peer editing followed the original action plan stated in chapter 3. However, peer-editing sessions were reduced to from five days a week due to the lack of instructional time. The 10-minute sessions were doubled to 20 minutes to provide for quality feedback. The post narrative prompt and the student attitude survey were administered in December. The researcher collected post data by assessing student narrative writing samples with the same mechanics and content rubrics.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

The post student attitude survey, the post content rubric, and the post mechanics rubric results were analyzed by the teacher/researcher. Comparisons were made with the pre and post student survey results, pre and post content rubric results, and pre and post mechanics rubric results.

The first instrument, a student attitude survey (Appendix A), was administered by the teacher/researcher to the targeted 50 sixth grade students during the third week of December, after the four month implementation of peer editing and teacher/student conferencing. The student survey contained the same six questions as the survey administered in September. The answers to three specific questions were compiled in Figures 10, 11, and 12. The first question asked students to indicate which phase of the writing process on which they spend the most time; the data were compiled in Figure 10. In Figure 11 students stated the phase of the writing process that is the most challenging and in Figure 12 students indicated the phase of the writing process that is the easiest for them.

Figure 10. Student attitude post survey responses to the phase of writing process on which students spend the most time.

Figure 10 shows the results of the post student attitude survey on the writing process in which students spend the most time. Eleven percent of the students stated that they spend the most time on prewriting and 26% stated that they spend the most time on drafting. Twenty-six percent of students felt they spend the most time on revising, 17% stated editing, and 20% indicated publishing as the phase of the writing process on which they spend the most time.

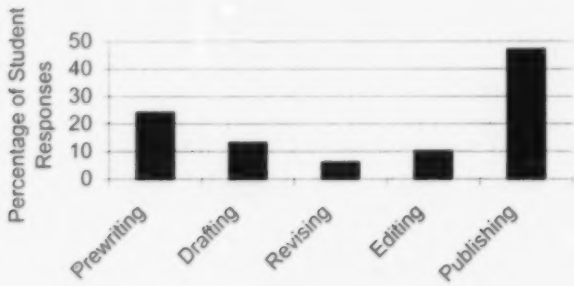

Figure 11. Student attitude post survey responses to the phase of the writing process that is the easiest for them.

Figure 11 displays the results of the post student attitude survey on the writing process that is the easiest for students. Twenty-four percent of students believed prewriting to be the easiest phase of the writing process, while 13% of students felt drafting is the easiest. In the

survey, 6% of students felt revising is the easiest phase and 10% stated editing. Forty-seven percent of students stated that publishing is the easiest phase of the writing process.

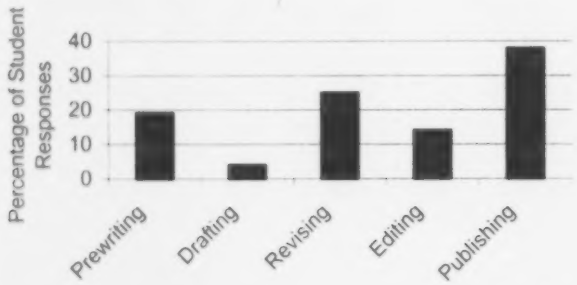

Figure 12. Student attitude post survey responses to the phase of the writing process that gives them the most trouble.

Figure 12 shows the results of the post student attitude survey on the writing process phase that causes students the most trouble. Nineteen percent of students stated that prewriting is the most challenging, while 4% felt drafting is the most difficult. For revising and editing, 25% of students stated that revising is the most difficult and 14% felt editing is the most challenging. Thirty-eight percent of students stated publishing as being the most challenging.

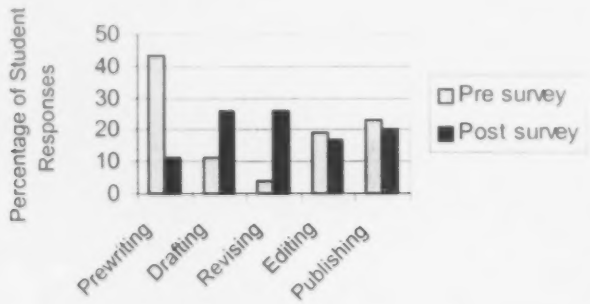

Figure 13. Pre and post results of student attitude survey showing the phase of the writing process on which students spend the most time.

Figure 13 displays the pre and post results of the student attitude survey on which students spend the most time. When comparing the September student attitude survey results to the December student attitude survey results, there are some significant differences in student responses. In September 43% of students felt they spend the most time on prewriting, and in December only 11% of students felt they spend the most time on prewriting. In addition only 11% of students in September stated they spend the most time on drafting, and after the four-month study, 26% of students stated that drafting is the phase of the writing process on which they spend the most time. For revising and editing, 27% of students in September felt they spend the most time on these phases of the writing process. However, in December 43% of students felt that revising and editing were the phases of the writing process that they spend the most time. The student results indicating that they spend the most time on publishing were similar for the pre and post surveys; 23% stated publishing in September and 20% in December.

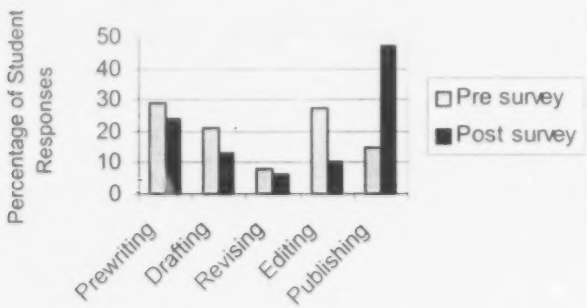

Figure 14. Pre and post results of student attitude survey showing the phase of the writing process that is the easiest for students.

Figure 14 shows the results of the pre and post student attitude survey results for the phase of the writing process that is the easiest for students. Before the implementation of the two

revision and editing strategies, 29% of the students believed that prewriting was the easiest phase. After the four-month study, 24% of students felt prewriting was the easiest phase of the writing process. In September 21% of students felt drafting was the easiest phase. However, only 13% of students stated that drafting was the easiest phase in December. For the pre survey results, 35% of students believed that revising and editing was the easiest phase of the writing process, while in December for the post survey only 16% felt that revising and editing was the easiest. Significantly, 47% of students indicated that that publishing was the easiest phase of the writing process after the four-month study, while only 15% stated that publishing was the easiest in September.

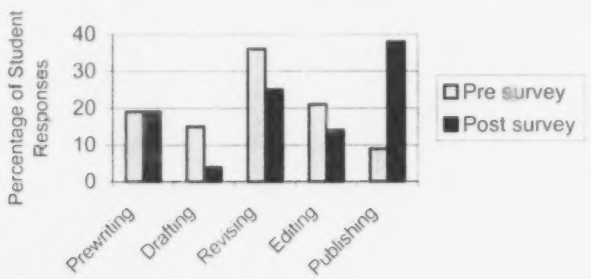

Figure 15. Pre and post results of student attitude survey showing the phase of the writing process that gives students the most trouble.

Figure 15 represents the pre and post results of the student attitude survey that is the most challenging for students. For both the pre and post surveys, 19% of students felt prewriting was the most difficult. In September, 15% of students stated that drafting was the most challenging, while in December only four percent felt drafting caused them the most trouble. For revising and editing, 57% of students felt these two phases were the most difficult in September. In December, 39% of students stated that revising and editing were the most difficult phases. Nine

percent of students stated that publishing was the most challenging in September, while in December, 38% of students stated that publishing gave them the most trouble.

During the second week of December, the teacher/researcher administered the second instrument, a narrative writing prompt (Appendix B), to 50 sixth grade students. The narrative writing prompt asked students to describe an unforgettable school day. The completed writing samples were used to determine post data on student revising skills. The students' narrative writing samples were evaluated with the same two rubrics as the prewriting samples from September, a content rubric and a mechanics rubric. The revision skills evaluated in both rubrics were taken from the district's sixth grade language arts curriculum, which aligns with the state language arts standards.

The content rubric for narrative writing (Appendix A) measured five aspects of revision: a) focus, b) clarity, c) organization, d) support, and e) imagery. These five areas were evaluated with a four-point rubric; four points represent student mastery of the skill and three or fewer points indicate that the skill is not mastered.

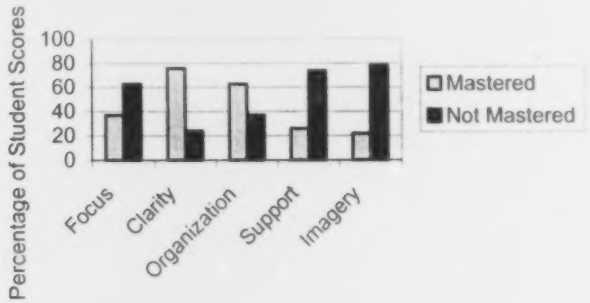

Figure 16. Results of the post writing rubric showing student content writing skills.

Figure 16 displays the results of the post content writing rubric from the students' narrative sample. Thirty-seven percent of students mastered the use of focus when writing a narrative, while 63% of students did not master it. In regard to the skill of clarity, 76% of

students demonstrated mastery and 24% did not demonstrate mastery. Sixty-three percent of students demonstrated mastery in the organization of their writing, and 37% did not demonstrate mastery. In the area of using support, 26% of students demonstrated mastery and 74% did not master the use of support. Twenty-two percent of students demonstrated mastery in the use of imagery, and 78% did not demonstrate mastery.

An average of 45% of the students demonstrated mastery in the content skills of focus, clarity, organization, support, and imagery. Fifty-five percent of students did not demonstrate mastery in the five categories.

The mechanics rubric for narrative writing (Appendix A) measures revision and editing skills in five categories: a) focus, b) clarity, c) organization, d) support, and e) sentence structure. Each skill category was evaluated based on a four-point rubric; four points represented student mastery of the skill and three or fewer points indicated that the skill was not mastered.

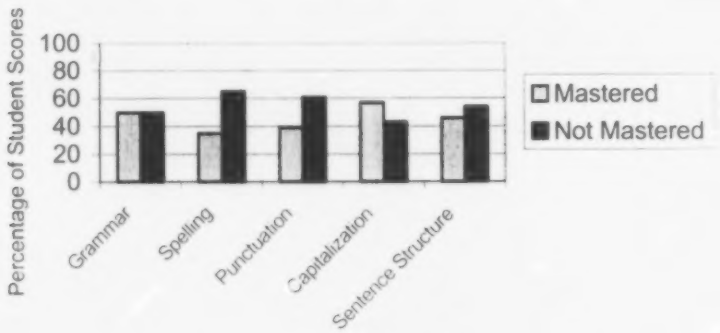

Figure 17. Results of the post writing rubric showing student skills in mechanics.

Figure 17 shows the results of the post mechanics rubric from the students' narrative writing sample. When using mechanics, 50% of students demonstrated mastery in the area of grammar and 50% did not demonstrate mastery. Thirty-five percent of students demonstrated mastery in the area of spelling while 65% did not demonstrate mastery. When using

punctuation, 39% of students demonstrated mastery and 61% of students did not master punctuation. Fifty-seven percent of students demonstrated mastery in capitalization and 43% did not demonstrate mastery after the four-month study. Finally, 46% of students demonstrated mastery in sentence structure while 54% did not master editing for appropriate sentence structure.

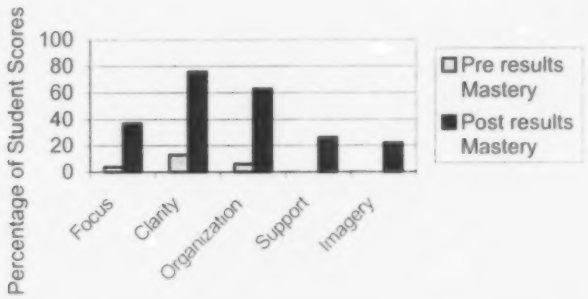

Figure 18. Pre and post results of rubric showing student skills in content.

Figure 18 displays the results of the pre and post rubrics used to assess student content skill level in the areas of focus, clarity, organization, support, and imagery. In September, only four percent of students demonstrated mastery in the use of focus while in December, 37% of students demonstrated mastery. For the prewriting sample, 13% of students demonstrated mastery in clarity. After the four-month study, 76% of students showed mastery in editing for clarity. For organization in their writing, six percent of students demonstrated mastery in the narrative prewriting narrative and 63% percent of students demonstrated mastery on the post narrative. In September, no students mastered the use of support and imagery in their writing. After implementing the writing workshop and the two revising and editing strategies, 26% of students mastered support and 22% of students mastered the use of imagery in their writing.

When comparing the pre and post rubric results of student content writing, there was an average increase of 40% in the mastery of content writing skills after the four-month study.

From September to December, student writing improved in the area of focus with an increase of 33% mastery. There was a 63% increase in student mastery of clarity, and a 57% increase in the mastery of organization in student writing. In the content areas of support and imagery, there was a 26% increase in student mastery of support and a 22% increase in the mastery of imagery.

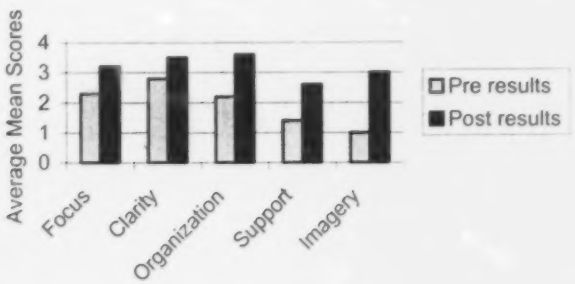

Figure 19. Pre and post results of the rubric showing mean scores in the area of content.

Figure 19 displays the average mean scores for the content areas of focus, clarity, organization, support and imagery. The scores are based on a rubric with a maximum score for each content area of four. In September, the average mean score for focus was 2.3, while the mean score in December was 3.2. The area of clarity showed a September mean average of 2.8 and an average mean score of 3.5 in December. The mean score for organization was 2.2 in September, and 3.6 in December. The area of support in Septem er showed a mean score of 1.4, while in December, it showed an average of 2.6. Imagery mean scores showed growth with an average of 1.0 in September and 3.0 after the four-month study in December.

After the four-month study, an average of 45% of students demonstrated mastery in all five content writing skills, while in September an average of only five percent of students demonstrated mastery. When specifically examining focus, support, and use of imagery, only 28% of the targeted sixth grade students demonstrated mastery and 72% did not demonstrate

mastery. However, 70% of students demonstrated mastery in the content areas of clarity and organization, while only 26% did not demonstrate mastery.

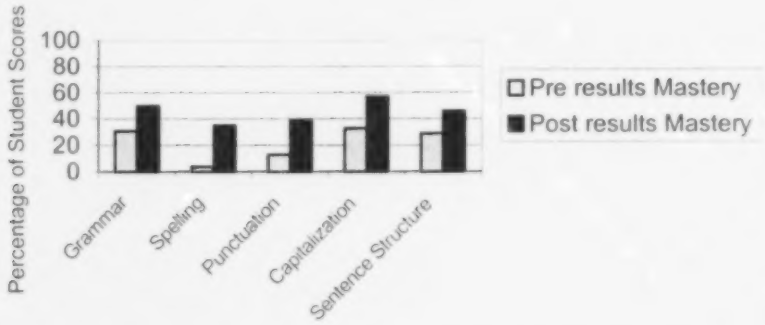

Figure 20. Pre and post results of the rubric showing student skills in mechanics.

Figure 20 displays the pre and post results of the narrative rubric, which assessed student skill level in mechanics during September and December. In regard to grammar skills, 31% of students demonstrated mastery in September and 50% demonstrated mastery in December. Four percent of students demonstrated mastery in spelling on the prewriting sample, while 35% demonstrated mastery in spelling for the post results. Regarding punctuation, 13% of students mastered using punctuation skills during September. In December, 39% of students mastered the use of punctuation. Thirty-three percent of students demonstrated mastery in the area of capitalization in September while in December 57% of students demonstrated mastery. In terms of accurate sentence structure, 29% of students demonstrated mastery on the pre writing narrative and 46% of students demonstrated mastery on the post writing narrative sample.

When comparing the pre and post rubric results of student mechanics writing, there was an average increase of 23% in the mastery of mechanics writing skills after the four-month study. There was a 19% increase in the mastery of grammar skills from the pre and the post rubric results. When examining spelling, there was a 31% increase in the mastery of spelling skills. In

the area of punctuation skills, there was an increase of 26% in the mastery of student punctuation skills. There was a 24% increase in student mastery of capitalization skills from September to December. Finally, there was an increase of 17% in student mastery of appropriate sentence structure from the pre and the post rubric results.

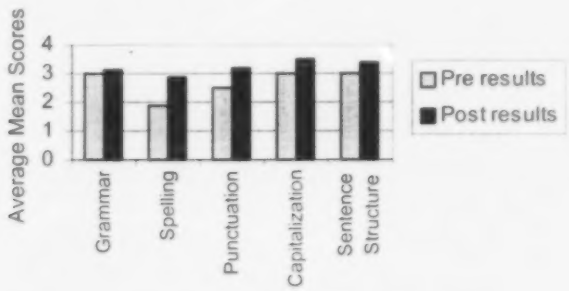

Figure 21. Pre and post results of the rubric showing mean scores in the area of mechanics.

Figure 21 displays the average mean scores for the areas of mechanics including grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence structure. The scores are based on a rubric with a maximum score for each content area of 4. In September the average mean score for grammar was 3.0 while in December it was 3.1. The area of spelling showed a September mean average of 1.9 and an average mean score of 2.9 in December. The mean score for punctuation was 2.5 in September and 3.2 in December. The area of capitalization showed a mean score of 3.0 in September; while in December it showed an average of 3.5. Sentence structure mean scores showed an average of 3.0 in September and 3.4 in December.

After the four-month study, an average of 45% of students demonstrated mastery in grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence structure. In September, an average of only 22% of students had demonstrated mastery in all five categories.

When examining the post results of the mechanics rubrics, many students received a three or near mastery in the areas of grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence structure. Thirty-nine percent of students demonstrated near mastery in grammar. Thus, 89% of students demonstrated mastery or near mastery in grammar. For spelling, 30% of students demonstrated near mastery, and therefore, 65% of students demonstrated mastery or near mastery in the area of spelling. When using punctuation, 35% of students demonstrated near mastery in the post results. Thus, 74% of students demonstrated mastery or near mastery in December. When examining capitalization and sentence structure, 35% of students demonstrated near mastery in capitalization and 46% demonstrated near mastery in sentence structure. Ninety-two percent of students demonstrated mastery or near mastery in the areas of capitalization and sentence structure.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the analysis of the attitude data collected from student surveys, implementing peer editing and teacher/student writing conferencing improves academic writing progress. The attitude survey data demonstrated growth in student understanding of the importance of revising and editing. With their increased understanding that revising and editing are not the easiest phases of the writing process, the students now devote more time to this part of the process.

Based on the analysis of achievement data collected from mechanics and content rubrics, implementing peer editing and teacher/student writing conferencing improved student revising and editing skills. When examining the pre and post content and mechanics rubrics, there was an average increase of 40% in the mastery of content writing skills and an average increase of 23% in the mastery of mechanics writing skills from September to December.

After implementing the interventions of peer editing and teacher/student conferencing, the researcher observed students demonstrating an understanding of the importance of revision. During the writing workshop, the researcher observed students spending more class time revising and editing their writing. By the end of the intervention, the students no longer rushed to finish drafting but began to carefully move through each phase. In addition, the students requested additional teacher/student conferences beyond the assigned weekly conference in order to gain additional feedback on their writing.

There are highly effective, yet simple recommendations for implementing teacher/student conferencing and a writing workshop: modeling the conference, having classroom discussions on writing workshop procedures, setting familiar routines, eliminating distractions and interruptions, and encouraging metacognative discussions. Modeling a conference with a student in front of the class will help the students' feel comfortable with the intimate teacher/student writing discussion. Also, instead of meeting at a teacher's desk or table, standing near each student's desk while conferencing assists behavior management by providing proximity control. In addition, teacher/student conferencing requires clear, predictable workshop procedures and routines. Having a planned time for a restroom break that does not interrupt the writing workshop is helpful. Procedures should be modeled, discussed, and debriefed daily to foster a successful workshop environment. When setting effective routines, students who are easily distracted such as children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) need distractions eliminated and interruptions minimized. This can be done by having easily distracted students draft their writing away from table groups, either on computers or at a table that faces a wall. In addition, daily student reflection over the workshop's successes and areas

for improvement is an essential component. This metacognitive reflection encourages students to monitor their own behavior during the workshop and is easily incorporated into the daily routine.

The modeling of one revising and editing skill at a time and careful record keeping are two final recommendations for implementing teacher/student conferencing. Teacher/student conferencing provides a personalized and individualized student instruction. In a 30-minute writing workshop session, however, time is limited and a conference should not be longer than five minutes. Thus, the teacher provides meaningful feedback by focusing on one skill at a time. This skill could be related to the day's or week's whole group instructional mini-lesson, a skill deficit found in the piece of writing the student is sharing during the conference, or a particular skill that the teacher has frequently found lacking in the student's writing. Over time, the teacher will find patterns in student skill strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, careful record keeping of each student's conference is a vital aspect of successful teacher/student conferences. Anecdotal records on student progress sharpen the teacher's focus on the improvement of specific individual revising and editing skill needs.

To promote successful peer editing sessions, the teacher needs to model a peer editing conference, create familiar routines, provide a peer editing guide, and encourage reflection regarding successes and areas for improvement. When modeling a conference, using a "goldfish" conference is a highly effective strategy (Tully, 1996, p. 74). Through the "goldfish" conference, effective procedures such as appropriate non-verbal cues, careful listening, providing helpful suggestions, and appropriate praise are modeled. A familiar routine is also necessary in order to effectively manage class time. Peer editing sessions should take place at a predictable

time such as the beginning or the end of the writing workshop. Although the literature discussed a daily 10-minute peer editing session, nevertheless, these sixth graders needed more time than 10 minutes to give quality feedback. Thus, the peer editing session was extended to 20-minutes. When the peer editing sessions were implemented less frequently such as once or twice a week, the researcher observed that the students were more motivated and interested in editing their peers' work. Another recommendation for implementing peer editing in the classroom is to provide groups with a peer editing guide. The students need more guidance during the early weeks of implementation. Thus, a guide with open-ended questions and a checklist of skills helps direct the students' peer editing discussions. Lastly, daily debriefing of the workshop's successes and areas for improvement helps to promote effective and efficient peer editing sessions. The metacognitive discussions should highlight helpful suggestions and appropriate praise from specific peer editing groups. Then the students should reflect on general effectiveness of the whole group's editing session.

Implementing a writing workshop, teacher/student conferencing, and peer editing, can be challenging. A minimum of one to two months is needed in order to have classroom routines set in place and to properly train students. During the first month of implementation, some students may not fully understand the purpose of writer's workshop due to little or no prior experience. Therefore, they do not understand the purpose of continually drafting and improving their writing. Other students will race to complete the phases of the writer's process within minutes. They will want to quickly state that they are done and may be resistant to go back and improve their writing by making further revisions. In addition, some students, especially students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or other students who are easily

distracted, will have a difficult time staying on-task and will need repeated reminders to not talk to students around them but to stay on-task during the workshop. Frequent distractions within the classroom and scheduling interruptions impede the teacher's ability to set clear and predictable workshop routines. These distractions and interruptions need to be eliminated in order to maintain focus.

In conclusion, post intervention achievement data and post intervention attitude data indicate significant growth in the revising and editing process. The post achievement data obtained from rubrics indicated a significant improvement in students' revising and editing skills in the areas of content and mechanics. In addition, post intervention student attitude survey data demonstrated significant growth in students' understanding of the importance of revising and editing.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Teacher Survey
Student Survey
Content Writing Rubric
Mechanics Writing Rubric
Baseline Narrative Writing Prompt

Teacher Survey of Student Writing Skills

Grade Level _____

Directions: Please circle the answer that best fits each question.

1. Which phase(s) of the writing process do you feel is the most difficult for students?

   Prewriting **Drafting** **Revising** **Editing** **Publishing**

2. Rate student writing proficiency for the following categories.

Capitalization:
mastered usually accurate rarely accurate not present

Spelling:
mastered usually accurate rarely accurate not present

Punctuation and Grammar:

Comma usage
mastered usually accurate rarely accurate not present

Apostrophes
mastered usually accurate rarely accurate not present

Quotations/dialogue
mastered usually accurate rarely accurate not present

Sentences (no run-ons, fragments, or choppy sentences)
mastered usually complete rarely complete not present

Focus/clarity:
mastered usually clear rarely clear not present

Providing support:
mastered usually sufficient rarely sufficient not present

Organization:
mastered usually logical rarely logical not present

Using imagery:
mastered usually included rarely included not present

Writing Skills Student Attitude Survey

_____
(name)

The five phases of the writing process are:

prewriting drafting revision editing publishing

1. For letters A-E, circle the number of the statement that best fits your understanding of the writing process, and fill in any necessary blanks.

A. I understand what is expected of each phase listed above.

B. I understand what is expected of *all the phases about except for one*, which is _____.

C. I understand what is expected *of all the phases but the following two:*

_____ and _____.

D. I understand what is expected of *all the phases but the following three:*

_____ and _____ and

_____.

E. I do not understand what is expected from any of the phases listed above.

For questions 2-6, circle the writing phase that fits you best.

2. The phase of the writing process that I most enjoy is:

prewriting drafting revision editing publishing

3. The phase of the writing process that I spend the most time on is:

prewriting drafting revision editing publishing

4. The phase of the writing process that I feel is most important is:

prewriting drafting revision editing publishing

5. The phase of the writing process that gives me the most trouble is:

prewriting drafting revision editing publishing

6. The phase of the writing process that is the easiest for me is:

prewriting drafting revision editing publishing

Narrative Story Rubric

Name _____ ____/22 Points

Date _____

	1	2	3	4
Focus	The subject is unclear throughout the piece of writing. The writing lacks a closing or resolution.	The subject is somewhat clear throughout the piece of writing. The writing may lack a closing or resolution.	The subject is clear throughout the piece of writing. The writing has a closing or resolution.	The subject is very clear throughout the piece of writing. The writing has an effective closing or resolution.
Clarity	Most sentences are unclear.	Some sentences are unclear.	Most sentences are clear and sensible.	All sentences are very clear and sensible.
Organization	The writing contains many gaps in sequence as it moves from beginning, middle, and end. The major events may or may not be in paragraphs. The writing contains no transitions.	The writing contains gaps in sequence as it moves from beginning, middle, and end. The major events are in paragraphs, but contain few or no transitions.	The writing sequence moves with a beginning, middle, and end. The major events are paragraphed and contain some transitions.	The writing sequence moves fluidly from beginning, middle, and end. The major events are appropriately paragraphed and flow as a result of transitions.
Support	Major events and reactions are not supported by a specific detail.	A few major events and reactions are supported by a specific detail.	Most major events and reactions are supported by a specific detail.	All major events and reactions are supported by more than one specific detail.

	1	2	3	4
Imagery	The writing lacks interesting nouns, verbs, and adjectives. The writing lacks metaphors, similes, etc.	Some word choices add to the description. The writing includes a few interesting nouns, verbs, and adjectives. The writing includes one metaphor, simile, etc.	Some word choices enhance the description. The writing includes some interesting nouns, verbs, and adjectives. The writing includes a few metaphors, similes, etc.	Careful word choices enhance the description. The writing includes interesting nouns, verbs, and adjectives. The writing includes metaphors, similes, etc.
Point of View	The piece of writing lacks a consistent voice throughout. There may be confusing tense shifts and pronoun usage.	The piece of writing has a consistent voice from beginning, middle, and end.		

Total Points _____/22

Mechanics Story Rubric

Name _____ Total Points = ____/20 = ____%

Criteria	Goal for Improvement The editing skill is not demonstrated. 1	Goal for Improvement The editing skill is inconsistently used. 2	Demonstrated Competence The editing skill is consistently used. 3	Demonstrated Mastery The editing skill is mastered. 4
Grammar	7 or more errors per page	3 to 6 errors per page	1 to 2 errors per page	No errors or no more than two errors for the entire story
Spelling	7 or more errors per page	3 to 6 errors per page	1 to 2 errors per page	No errors or no more than two errors for the entire story
Punctuation	7 or more errors per page	3 to 6 errors per page	1 to 2 errors per page	No errors or no more than two errors for the entire story
Capitalization	7 or more errors per page	3 to 6 errors per page	1 to 2 errors per page	No errors or no more than two errors for the entire story
Sentence Structure	7 or more errors per page	3 to 6 errors per page	1 to 2 errors per page	No errors or no more than two errors for the entire story

Writing Prompt

Think about an unforgettable or special trip you have been on. It could have been a trip to a zoo, to a museum, or a class field trip. It may be a trip you took to another state. The important thing is that the trip was unforgettable or special to you. You should:

1. Choose to write about one unforgettable or special trip.
2. Be sure to give specific details about the trip, what happened, who was with you, and how you felt during and after the trip.
3. Do not write about an imaginary trip. Tell about an actual trip you took.

Appendix B

Post Narrative Writing Prompt

Narrative Writing Prompt

Think about an unforgettable day at school. This unforgettable day could have been as recent as last week or could have occurred as long ago as kindergarten. The important thing is that the day was unforgettable or special to you.

1. Choose to write about one unforgettable school day.
2. Use the space below to plan your story. Then, begin drafting.
3. Be sure to give specific details about the day. Describe what happened, who was with you, and how you felt.
4. Retell about an event or events that actually happened to you.

Appendix C

Teacher/student Conferencing Lesson Plans
Peer Editing Lesson Plans
Peer Editing Guide
Checklist for Student Revising and Editing Skills

Lesson Plan for Writing Workshop

Conferencing Intervention

Week One Objective:

Students will learn and understand teacher/student conferencing procedures within a writing workshop setting.

Activities:

1) Discuss purpose of teacher/student conferencing
2) State rules and explain the procedures for teacher/student conferencing and writing workshop
3) Model conferencing procedures with a student in front of entire class
4) Explain checklist that will be used by the teacher during conferencing for anecdotal record keeping of student skills
5) Review rules and procedures for writing workshop

Weeks Two Through Fifteen Objective:

Students will participate in teacher/student conferencing within a writing workshop setting.

Activities:

1) Review rules and procedures for conferencing as needed
2) Conduct mini-lesson on one revising and editing skill daily (five to ten minutes)
3) Conference with 3-5 students daily for five minutes or less

Lesson Plan for Writing Workshop

Peer Editing Intervention

Week Five Objective:

Students will learn and understand peer editing procedures within a writing workshop setting.

Activities:

1) Discuss purpose of peer editing
2) State rules and explain the procedures for peer editing and writing workshop
3) Explain peer editing guide
4) Model peer editing procedures with a student in front of entire class using peer editing guide
5) Assign partners and practice editing for 20 minutes on last two days of week

Weeks Six Through Fifteen Objective:

Students will participate in peer editing within a writing workshop setting.

Activities:

1) Review rules and procedures for peer editing as needed
2) Conduct mini-lesson on one revising and editing skill daily (five to ten minutes)
3) Students will peer edit with a partner twice a week for 20 minutes

Peer Editing Guide

Author or Writer _____
Reader _____

1. One thing you stated that really interested me was . . . _____
_____

2. Something unclear about your writing was . . . _____
_____

3. Paragraph breaks are . . .
   _____ in sensible places.
   _____ needed in _____ place(s) that are marked "P" in your paper.

4. Your sentences are . . .
   _____ all complete.
   _____ needing editing for grammar, run-ons, and/or fragments in _____ place(s).

5. Your details are . . .
   _____ specific, descriptive, and support the main idea.
   _____ needing to be more specific and descriptive. Try including more interesting verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Use similes and metaphors to enhance description.

6. Transition words are . . .
   _____ found at least once in every paragraph.
   _____ needed to help the paper make more sense. Add transitions such as next, therefore, meanwhile, or suddenly.

Revising and Editing Skills Checklist

Writing checklist for_____

Skills	Mastered skill	Usually accurate	Rarely accurate	Not present
Grammar/Mechanics				
Grammar				
Capitalization				
Spelling				
Punctuation:				
commas				
apostrophes				
quotations/dialogue				
run-on sentences				
fragmented sentences				
Writing				
Focus (Did you stay on the topic?)				
Support (Did you use details and examples?)				
Organization of sentences and paragraphs (Are they in the right order?)				
Imagery (Does it appeal to the senses: see, touch, feel, taste, smell?)				
Clarity (Does it make sense?)				
Point of view (Who is telling the story?				

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